

## Andrew Jackson to Francis Preston Blair, August 12, 1836, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO FRANCIS P. BLAIR.

Private

Hermitage, August 12, 1836.

*My dear sir,* As you will have seen from the Public Journals I reached home on the evening of the 4th exhausted with bad roads and continued rains and my horses broke down. I am fearful that my fine lead horse will never get over his situation. it cost me as much for horse shewing and mending carriage as for other expences, we average about three shews a day until all my horses feet was torn to the quik and left almost without hoofs, but I am hear, mended much on the journey until the continued dampness gave me a bad cold and cough which I am now labouring under, and the pain in my side has returned also, and I fear I will have to use the lancet soon. I found all the family in improved health—say to mrs. Blair that there never were such a change in any one as in little Rachel, Sarahs. Emilys Rachel is not so well. we all Join in kind salutations to you, Mrs. Blair Miss Elisabeth and present our kind congratulations to your son and his Lady—the two little Rachels send their kind thanks to Miss *Lissy* for her presents to them.

I have duly noted your letter. Who give Genl Scott Genl Jessups letter will be a subject of Enquiry when I return—however it is immaterial—the delay of Genl Scott at Columbus, with his unaccountable order to Jessup to halt when near to the Indians,<sup>1</sup> when one hours delay might have been the cause of the Indians escape was sufficient proof of his want of capacity to fight Indians, and was sufficient ground to recall him from the command

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against Indians, indeed he reported himself sick at augustus and had permission to return to N. York, when Genl Jessup was order[ed] to the command of the Georgia and alabama Troops, and Scott ought to have retired and not have obtruded himself on the command assigned to Jessup, but when he did, he ought to [have] acted with Promptness and put this puny Indian war down in ten days. Genl Scott had ought to know, I had no hostile feeling towards him—the shameful proceedings in Florida, with the panic that pervaded every where which had tarnished the reputation of our army ought to have induced every military man to have exerted themselves to have regained the armies lost military character. the enquiry will be, has Genl Scott so acted, if so, he will stand acquitted, if not, he will stand condemned. The reply you have made to the Neapolitan was just. ?could any christian countenance the horid treachery and massacre of Fanning, and his men, after seducing them to surrender under written Terms subscribed by the proper authority. for this act Santa Anna forfeited his life on the just principles of retaliation, and policy could only Justify sparing him, and that was to get Texas cleared of the Mexican without the great sacrafice of men that might have been made in obtaining possession of Goliad, and the alamo—but if the Mexicans disavow his acts, and attemp[t] to renew her acts of butchery, then, I would retaliate to the knifehandle and not only put to death the officers with Santa anna at the head, but the soldiery, one for one. if Mexico made it a war of extermination, I would meet her by eye, for eye, tooth for a tooth, until she would learn to act like christians.

1 Scott to Jesup, Columbus, June 17, 1836, in *Proceedings of the Military Court of Inquiry*, 24 Cong., 2 sess., *Senate Docs.*, no. 224, p. 445; whereupon Jesup wrote to Blair June 20 ( *ibid.*, p. 454) a letter which he asked him to show to the President, who indorsed on it an order to the Secretary of War to recall Scott to Washington “in order that an inquiry be had into the unaccountable delay in prosecuting the Creek war, and the failure of the campaign in Florida”. For Scott's side of the controversy see his *Autobiography*, I. 262–274.

How has this Clerk Editor become acquainted with my opinion. I have had no conversation with him on this subject as far as I recollect. I have had but one opinion on this subject,

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and that was he had forfeited his life by the laws of a just retaliation, but it was humanity in Houston to spare him on the conditions agreed upon, and if these condi[tions] were not fulfilled St. anna was retained as a fit subject for retaliation if it became necessary. Your prudence and judgt. I have no doubt will guide you right in the case of Genl Scott. Why the Editor of the Neapolitan would drag my name into view as it regards St anna I know not, and if he has become the Editor of a Foreign Government he is unfit for a clerk in the war department.

Major Donelson promised to write you as soon as we got here the signs of the times as they appeared on our journey hither, whether he has done so I cannot tell. I can only say that the White and Bell delusion is wearing away very fast in Tennessee. Sullivan, Washington, Green, and Hawkins will all give majorities against White. I am invited to a dinner, barbecue, on the 20th. it, I expect will be numerously attended. say to Col Earle and Major Noland I have recd their letters but have not time or health to write them now— give my respects to them and major Lewis and all friends, and believe me yrs

P.S. I shall be with you about the first of october.